

News Release

Third Annual "Fiesta in the Spirit of Cinco de Mayo" April 15, 2011, at U of M Crookston to Honor Ramona Mendez with Announcement of Scholarship in her Memory

By Itollefs on Monday, March 28, 2011

It's a celebration Ramona Mendez would have loved, and one her son, Ken, is proud to have brought to the University of Minnesota, Crookston. Music, dance, and authentic Mexican cuisine highlight the "Fiesta in the Spirit of Cinco de Mayo" taking place on the Crookston campus on April 15, 2011. With new activities, this year's event promises to be the best one yet and the evening will also mark the kick off of the Ramona Mendez Endowed Scholarship fund drive.

The "Fiesta in the Spirit of Cinco de Mayo" is the kind of event Ken feels his mother would have loved and planned herself. "The celebration would have been the perfect night with music and dancing and all the things she loved," Mendez says. "And, I know the scholarship announcement would have truly humbled my mother who was a very unassuming woman."

The scholarship was the idea of Leticia Sanchez who works for Migrant Health Services in Crookston Mendez explains. Sanchez shared the idea with some other women and it caught on. Corby Kemmer, director of development and alumni relations on the Crookston campus is encouraged to see the creation of the scholarship fund. "We are here to support students as they pursue their dreams of an education," he says. "The scholarship fund created to honor the memory of Ramona Mendez is a tribute to Ken as he completes his bachelor's degree and an encouragement to others to do the same."

The scholarship is something Ken says he could not have imagined a few years ago. A senior majoring in communication, Ken will graduate in May and his only regret is that his mother cannot see him graduate. "I know how happy my graduation would have made her, and it is bittersweet that she cannot be here to share the day with me and my family."

The "Fiesta in the Spirit of Cinco de Mayo" begins at 4 p.m. and runs through midnight with a host of activities for all ages. From 4 to 7 p.m. there will be a marketplace and children's activities in the Sargeant Student Center. Authentic Mexican cuisine will be featured at a dinner beginning at 4:30 p.m. in Brown dining room and running concurrently will be a social with appetizers and music in the Eagles Nest. From 7 to 9 p.m. a program in Kiehle Auditorium will feature the dance troupe, Los Alegres Bailadores from Cottage Grove, Minn. The evening concludes with a family dance with the music of Sonora Café in Lysaker Gymnasium from 9 p.m. to midnight. All events are free and everyone is welcome.

The evening is made possible by a grant from the State of Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Foundation Legacy Amendment, University of Minnesota Crookston Concerts and Lectures fund and the Coke Community Initiative fund, a grant for cultural projects from the Crookston High School, and a donation from RiverView Health in Crookston.

For more information on the Legacy Destination weekend, visit www.exploreminnesota.com/travel-ideas/legacy/crookston/index.aspx.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

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